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California Approves Emergency Injection Well Rules

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By Carolyn Whetzel - BNA

California oil and gas regulators have approved interim regulations they proposed earlier this month to bring the state's Class II underground injection well program into compliance with federal law.

The emergency regulations are now in effect until Oct. 20.

However, the Department of Conservation's Division of Oil, Gas and Geothermal Resources (DOGGR) is developing another rulemaking package to make the regulations permanent, State Oil & Gas Supervisor Steven Bohlen said. The goal is to issue that rulemaking notice by the end of May, he said.

The regulations establish deadlines for the state to correct flaws found in an audit of the its underground injection practices that the Environmental Protection Agency conducted in 2011.

A key deficiency uncovered by the audit, and later confirmed by the state, was that DOGGR had allowed for several years the drilling of some injection wells for use as disposal wells in nonexempt aquifers, which could be a source of water suitable for drinking or irrigation.

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